

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 PHNOM 02423 080646Z

13

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SR-02 ORM-01 IO-10 AID-05 SCA-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 NIC-01 DPW-01

/076 W

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R 080530Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9258

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, CB

SUBJECT: UPDATE, REFUGEE SITUATION REPORT

1. DURING THE NIGHT OF 1 FEB. YET ANOTHER REFUGEE AREA WAS ASSAULTED BY ENEMY FORCES. THE CAMP OF TUOL TRACH, LOCATED IN KOMPONG SPEU (50 KM. WEST OF PHNOM PENH ON ROUTE NO. 4), WAS BURNED. TEN VILLAGERS WERE KILLED, 10 WOUNDED AND A FEW ARE STILL MISSING. SIX OF THE 10 VILLAGERS KILLED WERE YOUNG CHILDREN, UNDER 10 YEARS OF AGE, AND WERE BRUTALLY EXECUTED BY KNIFE AND BAYONET AFTER BEING CAPTURED BY THE ENEMY.

2. THE ENEMY APPEARS TO HAVE SHIFTED SOME OF THE FOCUS OF ITS ATTACKS FROM THE BATTLEFIELD TO THE VILLAGE. THE ABOVE MENTIONED REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT VILLAGE, BUILT USING AID GRANT FUNDS PROVIDED TO THE CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES, IS ONLY ONE OF MANY SUCH AREAS BURNED SINCE OCTOBER OF LAST YEAR. THE PATTERN SEEMS TO BE THE SAME, WHETHER IN SIEM REAP, PURSAT, KOMPONG CHHNANG, KOMPONG SPEU OR IN AREAS AROUND PHNOM PENH. IGNORING STATIC FANK DEFENSIVE MILITARY POSITIONS, THE ENEMY HAS CONCENTRATED THEIR ATTACKS ON VILLAGES, DIRECTING THEIR FIRE AT VIL-  
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PAGE 02 PHNOM 02423 080646Z

LAGERS INSTEAD OF AT SOLDIERS, AND VILLAGERS WHO HAVE

FALLEN INTO ENEMY HANDS HAVE BEEN RUTHLESSLY EXECUTED BY KNIFING OR BURNING.

3. ACCORDING TO REFUGEES THE KC HAVE TRIED TO WIN VILLAGERS OVER, ASKING THEM TO REFRAIN FROM COOPERATING WITH THE PHNOM PENH GOVERNMENT. AFTER BEING UNSUCCESSFUL IN THESE ATTEMPTS THE KC HAVE DECLARED THESE VILLAGERS AS THEIR MAIN ENEMY. THESE STORIES ARE CONFIRMED BY SOME FANK SOURCES WHO REPORT THAT ENEMY PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGNS HAVE PRONOUNCED VILLAGERS AS THEIR PRIMARY ENEMY, WITH BUDDHIST MONKS NEXT AND THE FANK THIRD. SIMILAR PROPAGANDA HAS BEEN REPORTED IN ALL AREAS OF THE COUNTRY; THIS IS NOT AN ISOLATED PHENOMENA, BUT RATHER SEEMS TO BE INDICATIVE OF A NEW ENEMY STRATEGY TO INFLICT EVEN MORE SUFFERING ON THE CIVILIAN POPULATION OF CAMBODIA.

4. INQUIRIES AS TO MOTIVES OF THE ENEMY HAVE PRODUCED A SIMILARITY OF RESPONSE, WITH THE ANSWERS VARYING ONLY IN DEGREE OF SOPHISICATION. THE REFUGEES EXPRESS THE VIEW THAT THE KC FORCES CONTROL MOST OF THE LAND AREA, BUT NEED MORE PEOPLE. THE ATTACKS ARE SEEN BY THE REFUGEES AS ENEMY PUNISHMENT INFLICTED ON THEM FOR REJECTING KC OFFERS TO COME OVER TO THE KC SIDE, OR TO CEASE COOPERATING WITH THE PHNOM PENH SIDE. RATHER THAN TRYING TO CAPTURE VILLAGERS AND FORCIBLY MOVE THEM TO KC CONTROLLED TERRITORY, THE REFUGEES FEEL THAT THE KC WANTS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT FANK IS UNABLE TO GIVE PROTECTION, AND THEREFORE FRIGHTEN THE VILLAGERS INTO BEING MORE RECEPTIVE TO, OR KOWTOWING TO FUTURE KC DEMANDS.

5. FANK HAS NOT SHOWN THE ABILITY TO PROTECT VILLAGERS FROM COMMUNIST ATTACKS, BUT IN SPITE OF THIS LACK OF PROTECTION WHICH EXPOSES VILLAGERS TO DAILY ATTACKS, AND IN SPITE OF THE MANY HARDSHIPS OF BEING A REFUGEE ON THE GKR SIDE, MOST REFUGEES INTIMATE THAT THEY WOULD RATHER BE POOR AND SUFFERING BUT HAVE THEIR FREEDOM THAN LIVE UNDER THE STIFLING REGIME OF THE KC. THIS IS BORNE OUT BY THOUSANDS OF REFUGEES THAT HAVE FLED FROM KC-CONTROLLED AREAS COMPARED TO THE ALMOST NEGLIGIBLE NUMBER OF REFUGEES WHO, IN SPITE OF THE IMPERFECTIONS AND FAULTS OF THE GKR, HAVE MOVED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 PHNOM 02423 080646Z

FROM GOVERNMENT-HELD TERRITORY TO THE KC SIDE.

6. THE GKR OFFICIALS AND MILITARY AUTHORITIES SEE THE ISSUE BASICALLY THE SAME AS THE REFUGEES, BUT ARE ABLE TO IDENTIFY MORE SPECIFIC REASONS FOR KC ATTACKS. THEY INDICATE THAT THE ENEMY HAS CONCENTRATED ON AREAS WHERE THERE HAS BEEN AN ACTIVE EFFORT TO PUT THE VILLAGERS BACK INTO AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS, OR WHERE THERE IS A STRONG

GOVERNMENT-SUPPORTED VILLAGE MILITIA.

7. A PARTICULAR TARGET OF ATTACKS HAS BEEN THE AID-FINANCED REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT CAMPS WHICH ARE BUILT AND SUPPORTED BY THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, AND ALSO THE AID-FINANCED RESETTLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION RICE PRODUCTION PROJECTS. BOTH OF THESE PROGRAMS ARE AIMED AT PUTTING REFUGEES BACK ON THE LAND AND GIVING THEM THE WHERE-WITH-ALL TO BECOME TO SOME DEGREE SELF-SUPPORTING. THE LIST OF RESETTLEMENT VILLAGES THAT HAS BEEN BURNED BY THE KC CONTINUES TO GROW EVERYDAY, AND OVER 80 PCT OF THE RDF'S PLANNED DRY SEASON PROJECT OF 20,500 HECTARES OF RICE HAS BEEN CANCELLED DUE TO KC ACTIVITY IN THE PROJECT AREAS. THE KC, BY KEEPING REFUGEES OFF FARMLAND AND NONPRODUCTIVE, CONTINUES TO DEMORALIZE THEIR SPIRIT AND ALSO PUT HEAVY PRESSURE ON AN ALREADY INFLATION-RIDDEN AND WEAK ECONOMY, WHICH MUST CONSEQUENTLY SUPPORT AN EVER INCREASING NUMBER OF REFUGEES.

8. IN SOME AREAS, VILLAGE MILITIA FORCES HAVE BEEN FAIRLY EFFECTIVE AGAINST ENEMY ATTACKS BECAUSE THE VILLAGE MEN SOMETIMES STAY AND FIGHT UNTIL THEIR FAMILIES HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO FLEE TO SAFETY. ALSO, THE ENEMY PERHAPS SEE THESE SELF-DEFENSE FORCES AS A POPULAR RESISTANCE TO THEIR INFLUENCE, AND THIS IS LIKE A THORN IN THEIR SIDE. SOME FANK MILITARY SOURCES SAY THAT BRUTAL KC ATTACKS AGAINST VILLAGES WHERE THERE IS A MILITIA ARE RETALIATORY EFFORTS BY THE ENEMY TO DISCOURAGE VILLAGERS FROM PARTICIPATING IN SELF-DEFENSE UNITS. MANY VILLAGERS, HOWEVER, FEEL THAT THEY ARE THE BEST PROTECTORS OF THEIR OWN INTERESTS, AND DESIRE TO CONTINUE GUARDING AND PATROLING THEIR OWN HOMES.

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PAGE 04 PHNOM 02423 080646Z

9. THE KHMER LANGUAGE PRESS MEDIA OFFERS YET ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE OF THE RECENT KC BRUTALITY. IT IS DIFFICULT FOR MANY CAMBODIANS TO RATIONALIZE THE SAVAGE NATURE OF RECENT KC ATTACKS. WHILE FIGHTING ON THE BATTLEFIELD IS UNDERSTANDABLE, THE SLAUGHTER AND EXECUTION OF INNOCENT WOMEN, CHILDREN AND MONKS IS NOT. ONE EXPLANATION THE KHMER NEWS MEDIA GIVE FOR THIS SENSELESS KILLING BY THE ENEMY IS THAT THE KC SOLDIERS FIGHTING NOW ARE VERY YOUNG AND ARE KHMER KROM (ETHNIC CAMBODIANS BORN IN VIETNAM) WHO HAVE GROWN UP UNDER VIETNAMESE CONTROL AND HAVE BEEN THOROUGHLY INDOCTRINATED IN RUTHLESS HARD CORE COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY. THE KHMER PRESS STATES THAT THESE SOLDIERS ARE NO LONGER CAMBODIANS, OR EVEN PEOPLE, BUT RATHER ARE KILLER-AUTOMATONS, ACTING WITHOUT EITHER HEART OR SOUL. APPEALS ARE MADE IN THE NEWSPAPERS AND ON THE RADIO TO THE

KC REQUESTING THEM TO GIVE UP THE SLAUGHTERING OF THE  
CAMBODIAN PEOPLE BEFORE THE RACE BECOMES EXTINCT, AND  
PLEADING WITH THEM TO JOIN GKR IN NEGOTIATIONS  
FOR A PEACE UNDER WHICH ALL CAMBODIAN PEOPLE CAN REGAIN  
THE GLORY THAT WAS ONCE THEIRS. DECONTROL 8/7/75.  
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## Message Attributes

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